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Stamas Bill Changes Sentencing Guidelines for Boating Hit-and-Run

Punishment would now be same as vehicular hit-and-run

State Senator Tony Stamas, R-Midland, this week introduced Senate Bills 658 and 659, which would change the punishment for the operator of a boat involved in a hit-and-run accident which resulted in death or a crippling injury from a misdemeanor to a felony. This change makes the penalty for this crime the same as those for causing a hit-and-run accident in an automobile.

Currently, the driver of a boat involved in such an accident is guilty of a misdemeanor and is subject to a maximum sentence of 90 days. Under the changes proposed by Stamas, someone guilty of failure to stop at the scene of a marine accident causing death would be guilty of a felony punishable by up to 15 years in prison and up to \$10,000 in fines. Someone guilty of failure to stop at the scene of a marine accident causing serious impairment would be guilty of a felony punishable by up to 5 years in prison and up to \$5,000 in fines.

(More)

Last September, 33 year-old Brent Veitengruber of Linwood was killed in a hit-and-run boating accident on Wixom Lake in Gladwin County. The operator of the other boat was convicted of negligent homicide and negligent crippling, a two-year high court misdemeanor, and was sentenced last week to one year in jail.

“This was a tragic accident that had a devastating effect on an entire family. It only makes common sense to make this necessary change in the law. I have spoken with the family of the victim of last year’s accident and they fully support this change to give solace to future families of those involved in similar tragedies” said Stamas. “I feel strongly that this should be a top priority when the legislature reconvenes in the fall.”

The Veitengruber Family issued the following statement: “The family of Brent Veitengruber is glad to see that Tony Stamas is doing what he can to help us in getting this law changed. It may not help us in what happened to our family in the past, but it will help us in knowing that we may help someone else in the future.”

Senate Bills 658 and 659 will be referred to committee when the legislature reconvenes.